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Amendments to the Claims:

Please cancel claims 1-2, 10-12, 18, and 21-46 and amend Claims 3-5, 8, 13, 14, 16, and 19 as follows:

Claims 1-2. (canceled).

3. (currently amended) The method of claim 8 ~~1~~, wherein said inputting step comprises inputting an initiative time period that includes an effective date and an expiration date.

4. (currently amended) The method of claim 8 ~~2~~, wherein said database is at least one of a decision support subsystem (DSS) database and a runtime offer database.

5. (currently amended) The method of claim 8 ~~2~~, further comprising:
determining an impact of the new initiative on other initiatives stored in the database.

6. (original) The method of claim 4, further comprising the steps of:
determining whether the new initiative is to be put into effect immediately;
storing the new initiative in the runtime offer database based on the determination that the new initiative is to be put into effect immediately; and
storing the new initiative in the DSS database based on the determination that the new initiative is not to be put into effect immediately.

7. (original) The method of claim 6, further comprising the step of:
applying data from the DSS database to the runtime offer database periodically in a time-initiated load cycle.

8. (currently amended) ~~A~~ The method of claim 4, further for creating a marketing initiative comprising the steps, performed by a processor, of:
inputting offer parameters for a new initiative, including an initiative time period and an initiative description;
associating customer selection criteria with the offer parameters;

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determining a likelihood that the new initiative will be effective prior to use of the new initiative using stored statistics reflecting hit rates based on characteristics of other past initiatives, where the hit rates indicate the number of times an initiative was selected as being relevant to a customer request;

providing a result indicating the effectiveness of the new initiative; and

storing the new initiative in a database based on the result,

wherein said determining step comprises:

receiving, at a runtime offers subsystem, a sales request from a marketing host;
extracting key values from said sales request, said key values including customer selection criteria;

creating key structures using said key values;

compressing said key structures into a series of key-paths; and

searching said ~~runtime offer~~ database using the key-paths to determine an initiative that is most relevant to the sales request.

9. (original) The method of claim 8, further comprising:

sending the most relevant initiative to the marketing host;

presenting the most relevant initiative to a customer; and

tracking initiatives that are presented to customers to assist in market analysis.

Claims 10-12. (canceled)

13. (currently amended) The sales manager system of claim ~~16~~ ~~11~~, further comprising:

an impact analysis unit for determining an impact of the new initiative on other initiatives stored in the database.

14. (currently amended) The sales manager system of claim ~~16~~ ~~12~~, further comprising:

means for determining whether the new initiative needs to be put into effect immediately;

means for storing the new initiative in the runtime offer database based on the

determination that the new initiative is to be put into effect immediately; and

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means for storing the new initiative in the DSS database based on the determination that the new initiative is not to be put into effect immediately.

15. (original) The sales manager system of claim 14, wherein data from the DSS database is applied to the runtime offer database periodically in a time-initiated load cycle.

16. (currently amended) A The sales manager system of claim 12, further comprising including a sales manager workstation for creating a marketing initiative comprising:

a sales manager workstation controller including means for entering offer parameters for a new initiative and means for associating customer selection criteria with the offer parameters;

a trend analysis unit using stored statistics reflecting hit rates based on characteristics of other past initiatives to determine a likelihood that the new initiative will be effective prior to use of the new initiative, where the hit rates indicate the number of times an initiative was selected as being relevant to a customer request, wherein a result is provided indicating the effectiveness of the new initiative;

a decision support subsystem (DSS) database, wherein the new initiative is stored in a database based on the result;

a runtime offer database; and

a runtime offers subsystem, said runtime offers subsystem including:

a runtime offer compiler connected to the DSS database, said runtime offer compiler including means for extracting new and updated initiatives from the DSS database and means for transferring said new and updated initiatives to the runtime offer database, wherein said runtime offer database is part of the runtime offers subsystem; and

a runtime offer evaluator connected to the runtime offer database, said runtime offer evaluator including means for extracting key values from a sales request received from a marketing host, means for creating key structures using said key values, means for compressing said key structures into a series of key-paths, and means for searching said runtime offer database using the key-paths to determine an initiative that is most relevant to the sales request.

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17. (original) The sales manager of claim 16, wherein said runtime offer evaluator further comprises:

means for sending the most relevant initiative to the marketing host; and
means for tracking initiatives that are presented to customers to assist in market analysis.

Claim 18. (canceled).

19. (currently amended) A The sales manager system of claim 18, comprising:

a sales manager workstation for creating a marketing initiative, said sales manager workstation including a sales manager workstation controller including means for entering offer parameters for a new initiative and means for associating customer selection criteria with the offer parameters, a trend analysis unit using stored statistics reflecting hit rates based on characteristics of other past initiatives to determine a likelihood that the new initiative will be effective prior to use of the new initiative, where the hit rates indicate the number of times an initiative was selected as being relevant to a customer request, and an impact analysis unit for determining an impact of the new initiative on other initiatives stored in a database;

a decision support subsystem (DSS) database connected to the sales manager for storing the new initiative;

a runtime offers subsystem connected to the DSS database for using information from a customer request to determine a most targeted initiative; and

a marketing host connected to the runtime offers subsystem, said marketing host including means for sending customer requests to the runtime offers subsystem,

wherein said runtime offers subsystem comprises:

a runtime offer compiler connected to the DSS database, said runtime offer compiler including means for extracting new and updated initiatives from the DSS database and means for transferring said new and updated initiatives to the runtime offer database, wherein said runtime offer database is part of the runtime offers subsystem; and

a runtime offer evaluator connected to the runtime offer database, said runtime offer evaluator including means for extracting key values from a sales request received from a marketing host, means for creating key structures using said key values, means for

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compressing said key structures into a series of key-paths, and means for searching said runtime offer database using the key-paths to determine an initiative that is most relevant to the sales request.

20. (original) The sales manager of claim 19, wherein said runtime offer evaluator further comprises:

means for sending the most relevant initiative to the marketing host; and

means for tracking initiatives that are presented to customers to assist in market analysis.

Claims 21-46. (canceled).

47. (previously presented) A sales manager system including a sales manager workstation for creating a marketing initiative comprising:

a sales manager workstation controller including means for entering offer parameters for a new initiative;

a trend analysis unit using stored statistics associated with past initiatives to determine a likelihood that the new initiative will be effective, wherein a result is provided indicating the effectiveness of the new initiative;

a database in communication with said trend analysis unit, wherein the database is at least one of a decision support subsystem (DSS) database and a runtime offer database, and wherein the new initiative is stored in the database based on the result; and

a runtime offers subsystem, said runtime offers subsystem comprising:

a runtime offer compiler connected to the DSS database, said runtime offer compiler including means for extracting new and updated initiatives from the DSS database and means for transferring said new and updated initiatives to the runtime offer database, wherein said runtime offer database is part of the runtime offers subsystem; and

a runtime offer evaluator connected to the runtime offer database, said runtime offer evaluator including means for extracting key values from a sales request received from a marketing host, means for creating key structures using said key values, means for compressing said key structures into a series of key-paths, and means for searching said

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runtime offer database using the key-paths to determine an initiative that is most relevant to the sales request.

48. (previously presented) A method for creating a marketing initiative comprising:
receiving offer parameters for a new initiative;

determining a likelihood that the new initiative will be effective using stored statistics associated with past initiatives, wherein a result is provided indicating the effectiveness of the new initiative;

providing a database that is at least one of a decision support subsystem (DSS) database and a runtime offer database;

storing the new initiative in the database based on the result;

extracting new and updated initiatives from the DSS database;

transferring the new and updated initiatives to the runtime offer database;

extracting key values from a sales request received from a marketing host;

creating key structures using the key values;

compressing the key structures into a series of key-paths; and

searching the runtime offer database using the key-paths to determine an initiative that is most relevant to the sales request.